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A

CANDID INQUIRY

INTO THE

DEMOCRATIC SCHEMES

OF THE

DISSENTERS,

DURING

THESE TROUBLESOME TIMES.

Tending to shew, that under the Cloak of Religion, they disseminate their Political Principles against the Church and State.

BRADFORD:

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A CANDID INQUIRY, &c.

IN order to ascertain the real state of a nation, with respect to its internal safety, one of our first inquiries will be into the state of the press; and the next into the state of religion. In a former publication I have exposed the connexion of the conspirators against social order with the press: In the present it is my design to examine as closely what use they are, at this moment, making of religion, for it seems they are aware of an egregious blunder they were guilty of at the outset of their scheme; and are endeavouring to retrieve their affairs by a change of men and measures. Common sense might teach almost every man, who has lived under a pure dispensation of Christianity, that there can be no government so stable as that which is supported by religion. Priestley so far acknowledged this obvious truth, as to improve upon the French system, by admitting Socinianism into his plan; but in Socianism there is nothing solid for the mind to rest upon: it is an apology to enable us to indulge our passions with ease, and satisfy our consciences, upon

which no one but a fool (I use the term in the Scripture sense) can possibly rely.* There is nothing in Socianism sufficiently specious to deceive any great number of men possessing the sterling sense of enlightened Englishmen. There were therefore, at that time, men of deeper thought who foretold the speedy failure of his enterprize, and who, from the very first, have been playing a slower but much surer game. They know that religion may not only be made a mask for the most atrocious villany, but that it may be made a bond of union, a stay to timidity, and a spur to vigilance. The first thing necessary to bring this formidable engine into play, on the side of the conspiracy, was to raise a general odium against the Clergy and the established forms of worship. The methods taken to do this against the Clergy, were to insinuate the idea, that every man who preaches with notes is an unconverted man, and of consequence preaches not by the direction of the spirit of God: and that if a Minister is not called by the spirit of God to preach, he is a robber of God's heritage, and a murderer of souls: a pest to society, whom no man of conscience ought to attend in his ministerial capacity, or

* Poor I—bb— was, after all his philoſophic parade, a lamentable inſtance of the inſufficiency of Socinian principles to ſupport a ſenſible man at the hour of death: Inſtead of looking to his God with the firmneſs of a Chriſtian, he threw himſelf down upon the ſofa, and in the moſt melancholy manner exclaimed, "all is over."

even to shew him common civility as a member of the social compact. Hence it has been very much the fashion lately amongst the Dissenters, not even to move their hats to a Clergyman of the Establishment.*

"Let us look,"§ says one of the most respectable

* When the fever of Democracy ran very high amongst the Dissenters, a Clergyman of the Writer's intimate acquaintance, was told by one of them, with great impertinence, that he must soon be "stripped of his Bishop's gown." This interview took place in the public street, as the Clergyman was going peaceably to administer in his sacred function.

§ Pawson's Sermons, page 324. Surely more abandoned falsehoods were never told by a man pretending to be inspired, than are to be met with in this gentlemen's sacred pages. But where is the consistency among the Methodists? The venerable Mr. Pawson wishes to overturn the Church, and charitably sends the Clergy, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, to the Devil. But the no less venerable Mr. Wesley says, speaking of the Church of England, O pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee. Hampson's Life of Wesley. And Mr. Alexander considers Methodism defensible only as an auxiliary to the Church. The Writer has observed a great deal of this inconsistency, with their principles, amongst certain descriptions of people, which leads him to suspect that they have either no settled principles or no consistency.

The Democrats were unanimously the Friends of the People; but as soon as a GOLDEN IMAGE was set up in the plains of Dura, in the province of Babylon, who so forward to press into the new machinery, and grind the faces of the poor? Have no lives been lost to the community upon this melancholy occasion? The most dreadful sacrifice mentioned in history is that, when men offered their sons and daughters unto Devils; and perhaps the next to it, is that, where the comfort of so many of our fellow creatures is sacrificed to Mammon. This note has clearly a local allusion. EDITOR.

amongst the Methodist Teachers, in a recent publication, " for religion amongst our teachers and " spiritual guides, but alas! how like the Jewish " priests are these! from the least even to the " greatest, are they not every one given to covetous- " ness? and from the prophet even to the priest, " every one dealeth falsely. These words are lite- " rally and strictly true. Is there any set of men " whatever more given to covetousness, than our " priests in general are? Surely no. Are they " not in general deeply athirst for preferment, for " the most valuable livings, and for as many of " them as they can possibly get? Do they not " make all the interest with great men, and take " every method, and use every means they can " think of, for this end? Do they not take every " advantage that lays in their power, and very of- " ten are guilty of the greatest oppression, to in- " crease their revenue. Regardless of the people " committed to their charge, they are only con- " cerned how they may add one church living to " another, and by that means rise in the world and " aggrandize themselves and their families. Being " entire strangers to the Gospel of Christ, and to " the nature of true religion; destitute of divine " grace, and of every ministerial qualification; " having neither the gift of prayer nor preaching; " and indeed, at present. there is no need of either, " as all the prayers which they want are already

" made to their hands, and they may purchase
" sermons in abundance for money; so that the
" dumb dog, who cannot bark himself, may thus
" use another's tongue; and, as the prophet speaks,
" *he may lay down and slumber and sleep*, till the
" sound of the bells awake and call him to church;
" and although, like the Psalmist, he has not hid
" the word of the Lord in his heart, yet he has
" got it in his pocket, and that will do just as well
" for him. A poor blind leader of the blind; he
" stumbles on in the dark paths of error, and in
" the crooked ways of sin. Deceived himself, he
" tries to deceive all who hear him: till, without
" a miracle of mercy, both he and they fall head-
" long into the pit of eternal destruction. These,
" of all the dangerous men upon earth, are to be
" avoided. Highway-men and murderers are in-
" nocent in a comparison of them; they rob man-
" kind of the unsearchable riches of Christ, yea, of
" present and eternal salvation: these wretched
" men murder the souls of their hearers, and plunge
" them into everlasting burnings. Well might our
" blessed Lord bid us beware of these false pro-
" phets; and his faithful servant exhorts us to turn
" away from those men who deny the power of
" godliness. No wonder that such enemies of God
" and man were expressly commanded to be stoned
" to death under the Mosaical dispensation, as it
" is written, (Deut. 13 ch. 5 v.) and that prophet

" shall be put to death, &c. so dreadfully severe
" was the Mosaical law respecting false prophets;
" but it does not appear that they ever executed
" this part of the law at any time. On this ac-
" count it is a doubt with me whether it was not
" owing to this very thing, that as a nation they
" were totally ruined, as by their neglect false pro-
" phets increased among them to the degree, that
" the whole nation sunk into the very dregs of the
" most abominable idolatry, till the Lord would be
" no more intreated; and the prophet foretells the
" happy time when even the father or mother of such
" monsters who shall venture to prophecy falsely,
" in the name of the Lord, shall thrust him thro'
" with a dart, (Zech. 13 ch. 3 vr.) and it shall
" come to pass, &c.

" Here we see what the prophet foretold would
" come to pass in the purest ages of the Church;
" but it is become so common, so familiar to us, to
" hear men prophecy falsely, and to deliver doc-
" trines directly contrary to the holy word of God,
" yea, doctrines of the most pernicious and destruc-
" tive tendency, that we think but very little of it,
" and pass over it as if it was a matter of little or no
" consequence at all. Shall we then attend upon
" the ministry of such deceivers as these? Would
" not that be to *strengthen the hands of the wicked;*
" and would not that tend to make them believe

" that we look upon them as the ministers of " Christ, and should we not thus far be partakers " of their sin? Let us rather follow the advice of " the apostle, *and let us neither receive them into our " houses nor bid them God speed.* Let us shew them " no manner of countenance, lest we are sharers in " their evil deeds. Had this method been always " taken, had the people withdrawn from these " wolves, then we should not have such swarms " of them as we now have; but it has evidently " been the ruin of the Church of God the counte- " nance which has been given to these unhappy men, " who have always been a plague and a curse where- " ever they have met with encouragement. That " religious men, notwithstanding all this, should " think it their duty to countenance such men, is " truly wonderful. If we know that a thief is lay- " ing in wait to rob our neighbour of his property, " and much more if we see the murderer ready* to

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* If such excessive folly has been published by one of their most respectable preachers, what may not be expected to proceed from the spouting lads of the connexion. Michael Angelo Taylor was certainly right; but why did he not proceed in his motion?—The following facts may be depended upon:—In one of the meetings a person prayed that the Divine Being would make A BANKRUPT of the DEVIL and DO HIM UP DISH and SPOON. In another, a village preaching, the orator took for his subject the favorite text, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Here, says the orator, you will observe, it is he that believeth, my brethren, not he that

" take away his life, we justly think it our bounden
" duty to apprise him of his danger; but we can
" see nothing amiss in suffering the false prophet
" to murder his soul and rob him of his eternal sal-
" vation. We pray that the Lord would not suf-
" fer us to be led into temptation, and that he
" would preserve us from all false doctrine; and
" yet we put ourselves into the way of temptation,
" and we very willingly go where we know that
" we shall hear false doctrine; and yet we vainly
" think we are doing our duty. If ever there
" was an age in which these awful words were
" fulfilled, they are in our day. The prophets
" prophecy falsely, and the priests bear rule by
" their means, and my people love to have it so,
" and what will ye do in the end thereof?

" But it will be said, *all our teachers are not of*
" *this stamp*. I answer, no, God forbid they
" should: but how very little better are many of

BELIEVES; it is, I say, he that believeth, not he that believes. It seems to have something of a PLURAL number about it. Only few evenings are past since I stopped, for a moment, at the door of the tabernacle; the orator was in his full career. The human heart, said he, is depravity itself; nay, said he, it is not only depravity, but it is DEPRAVED. This last was spoken with a most sapient look; and then the orator recovered his stretched-out-hand to scratch his head. The orator is reported to be one of the best educated gentlemen in the whole connexion of Methodism. Can judicious men approve of these things?

" those who bear the name of Gospel Ministers ?
" How few of those have been truly converted to
" God, or have experienced a clear sense of his
" love ? And wherein is an unconverted Minister
" to be accounted of ? Can the dead raise the
" dead ? How few of them have got ministerial
" gifts either of prayer or preaching ? Does the
" Lord send them a warfare at their own cost ?
" Hath he who ascended up on high, and received
" gifts for men, forgot; or does he neglect to im-
" part them to his servants ? Are not the general
" part of them as much athirst for church* prefer-
" ment as others ? And would they not be as glad
" to enjoy a second or third living if they could
" find a way to compass so desireable an end ?
" And can they not give a very weighty reason for

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* The Writer has not been much in the habit of attending either Methodiſt meetings or village preachings: When he was accidentally, however, at one of the former, he perfectly recollects the preacher's informing his audience, that he came to them with no pompous degree from either of the Univerſities; but he came with a commiſſion from the Lord of Hoſts: the inference was obvious, but the hint was certainly a very unfair one. One of the village preachers he had the honour to hear, who is ſaid to be one of the ableſt of thoſe of the Calviniſtic perſuaſion in the kingdom, drew a parallel betwixt the Jewiſh falſe prophets and the Eſtabliſhed Clergy, not more favourable to the latter than that we have already introduced from Mr. Pawson. From theſe ſpecimens he concludes, that the regular Eccleſiaſtics are not leſs libeled from the ſtool and in the tabernacle, than from the preſs: he is, however, perſuaded, that Chriſtianity teaches us always to PRAY for our fellow-creatures, but never to rail at them.

" this ?. namely, that they may place a Curate there " who will preach the Gospel, yes, and let them al- " low him the whole income also. But do they preach " the Gospel themselves ? They preach some part " of the Gospel it cannot be denied; but, properly " speaking, they do not preach the whole Gospel, " that is, they do not lead the people to the Lord " Jesus Christ, so as to experience the salvation " which he hath purchased; but they make the " knowledge of our disease the cure also."

Thus this imprudent old man goes on to abuse the regular Clergy. This is the return he makes for being indulged by the Legislature for a number of years in the eccentricities of Methodism, and for the mild treatment he has met with in return for the depredations he has made upon the flocks legally committed to their care, from men probably of candour, liberality, and learning. He indeed has been living out of the poor man's pittance, with a whole fraternity of the same description, with no better title that I know of, either to the ministerial office, or his support in it, than Mahomet pleaded to his empire and priesthood, namely a strong persuasion that he was called of God: But who is not aware that this is not only the plea of every enthusiast, but of every hypocrite? If this plea is to be admitted *without the proofs*, we shall not only soon see an end of Government but of Christianity itself.

and if there are no better proofs of Christianity in the *self-consecrated Methodists* than what is afforded us in the above extract, there must be some reason to fear the consequences to their wretched followers, so long as it remains an evangelical maxim, that if the blind lead the blind they will both fall into the ditch. By such unwarrantable means however, exerted with indefatigable industry, they have assuredly contrived to bring the regular Clergy into contempt amongst the lowest classes of the people; and, in consequence of this, we have known extremely respectable men treated with neglect in their ministerial capacities, while an ignorant upstart has been followed and admired by the multitude.

Another mode of prejudicing the people against the Clergy, has been by giving a sanction to every slanderous report raised to their discredit, upon very insufficient grounds. This has been chiefly done in the way of religious gossiping, which is dreadfully too prevalent in the present day. The Writer perfectly recollects an instance in point: After having heard many of the regular Clergy abused as drunkards and profane swearers, What is your opinion, said he, to a Methodist preacher, of Mr. ——— ? Is he not considered as a pious man, and as one who takes some pains in his parish ? " Why sir, to be sure," replied the other, " he takes some pains in his parish, but he is a *weak* man, and a man of bad character." What proofs are there of this ?

"Oh! he is known to have been guilty of atrocious crimes!" But the proofs, sir, I say," replied the Writer. "Why, sir, he has been * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Is the accuser a man of respectable character? "Not very." Was you never accused of any thing bad? The Methodist blushed—"Why yes," to be sure, sir, said he, "it was reported that I had a bastard child, and kept it at ———." Was it true? "It was not." Then do, sir, I entreat you, go and learn not to take away the character of a respectable Clergyman upon no better evidence than that of a notorious profligate.

Another method made use of to diminish the respect due to the regular Clergy, has been by calumniating the mode of their support, which has been so long sanctioned by the approbation of our ancestors. A gentleman, who is at the head of the Methodists, at Hull, has written a low, scurrilous, and malignant pamphlet against tithes, sufficiently democratic, I make no doubt, to have merited the applause of the Jacobin Reviews. "Is it equitable," says this strange writer, (page 40) "that whenever I work for myself I should be compelled to work for another also? Let it be conceived that by an unjust law I were laid under the necessity of providing the means of support for an indolent, useless family, in the town in which I live; and that I were compelled to work for that family as long as

I should work for my own, and with a certainty that one-third or one-half of my gains should be taken from me, ought such *oppression* to be borne?" Quere: If one of this gentleman's porters or clerks, who happened to be a married man, had proposed this question to him, with an immediate reference to his own case, what would have been the answer from this successful Banker?* Ought such oppression to be borne? Certainly not, sir, upon the Jacobin principle on which your arguments against tithes entirely rest, that *every man* is to be remunerated according to the *quantity* of his *labour;* for if this were the case, the master would certainly become the servant, and the servant the master; and therefore, sir, as you are, I trust or would hope, a holy man, though surely you will not deem yourself more so than the great founder of tithes, you certainly ought, without loss of time, to enter into an

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* We might recommend to the perusal of this conscientious gentleman, a small pamphlet, written upon the "Iniquity of Banking." I do not remember having seen a more indecent advertisement relative to the property of a respectable body of men, than one which issued lately from the Grand Jury at York. An answer to that advertisement ought to have come from the Archdeacon and his Clergy, proposing to the landholders a commutation in lieu of rents for the encouragement of agriculture, intimating, at the same time, that this ought to be taken into serious consideration by the Legislature. If the little fishes which are left for Christ's flock are to be taken away to satisfy the hungry maws of democratic cormorants, a FORTIORI, the leviathans ought to be cut up for the sake of the blubber.

exact calculation of the profits of your commercial transactions for many years past, and let every poor fellow who has been *cajoled* by you so long out of the fruits of his labour, receive at length *his exact and proper share* of your gains. As far as this business relates to the Clergy, and their tithes, and *their idle and useless families*, it will probably be thought that the following rebuke is not unfairly applicable to this Writer: First, cast the beam out of thy own eye, and then shalt thou see more clearly to remove the mote from thy brother's. But I beg the reader's pardon for the digression, and once more resume my subject. The Methodists appear to me to be made, with great art, a kind of pioneers to men of more subtile minds, who have, with equal assiduity, endeavoured to raise as great a degree of odium against the Hierarchy in general, and in particular against the book of common prayer. Small and large editions of works for this purpose have been circulated with great assiduity; but yet with a secrecy that made it difficult to ascertain from what quarter they really came; and reviews of a religious complexion were established, in which the praise of the Dissenters has been trumpeted forth, in a way peculiarly calculated to win vulgar admiration, by making their teachers live such lives and die such deaths as no men, the Apostles themselves not excepted, ever lived and died before. One of these publications has also served as a point of

union for all those who wish to contribute their mite, to the destruction of the Church, under whatever denomination they wish to arrange themselves.

It has indeen been asserted by a Writer in the Anti-Jacobin Review, "that his perfect knowledge of the Evangelical Magazine from its first rise, enables him, and requires him to affirm, that it is in no respect inimical to the civil or religious establishments of the realm." In answer to which astonishing falsehood, I beg leave to assure the reader, that the publication in question contains more than* one very artful attack upon the Hierarchy; and that if the Magazine had not been inimical to the Constitution, at least in Church, it never would have craftily pretended to court an answer to one of these attacks, and when one was actually sent refused to insert it.

Induced by this circumstance to examine a little more minutely into this Magazine, we shall find that this attack is by no means singular, for a writer, perhaps the least contemptible in the squad, in point of literary acquirements, introduces his heteredox sentiments to our notice with more sarcastic pomp than is requisite even for a Roman Pontiff in the

* The reader is requested to turn to page 270, and page 369, of the Evangelical Magazine for May, 1797.

plenitude of his power. "By a Bishop,"§ says he, "I must be allowed to understand, not a *Lord in lawn*, but a Christian Pastor:" and the respect which is further thought due by these *infallible* instructors, to one of the best of men in lawn, sleeves, may be collected from the vision introduced, (page 57, for 1795) where a truly amiable Prelate and his Clergy are evidently held up in the most sarcastic manner to popular odium and contempt. "Where lies the fault, my Lord, (Death is introduced as the speaker) for *a fault there is somewhere*. You have many assistants in this great city, who are well paid for carrying on the work of preparation, but by what I see and hear, when I visit your flock, *very few are informed of* my power, and are prepared to submit to my stroke. The bells toll, and the Churches are open every Sabbath-day, but your assistants in general are very *sparing* of *their labours*, and care not to disturb their hearers on my certain dominion over all men, nor do they *shew* them by *what means* they *may make me their friend*, and have a happy passage through my dark valley. I would have you look to these things my Lord, you know I am not ceremonious, you and I shall meet again 'ere long. I wish to meet you as a friend, and by my advice to subserve your best interests."

§ Vide Evangelical Mag. for 1795, page 486.

This, to my plain understanding, is not very friendly either to the Clergy or the Establishment.

"There are some of God's chosen people,"* *says another of these well-affected writers,* "in mystical Babylon, even at the time when her destruction is very near: hence, when her fall is foretold, we hear also this gracious call: *Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.* Rev. ch. 18. vr. 14. *We are Protestants,* may some say, *and have separated from her communion,* we have therefore come out of her long ago, and we see not what concern we have with these words, as they cannot be spoken to us. There is certainly a distinction to be made between the power and spirit of Antichrist. Men may revolt from the *former,* while they are intirely under the influence of the *latter.* Are there not many who profess to be Protestants, become Papists in several of their leading principles? Are there not many who are now aiding and supporting the *cause* and *interests* of *Rome,* when they see her destruction fast hastening? We should beware, therefore, of being led away with error, lest we be found *running* to *give her assistance,* when we are called to come out of her."

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* Evangelical Magazine, for 1796, page 105.

This, appears as *friendly* to our Rulers in State, as the Magazine was found in another instance to the wearers of lawn; but when it is recollected, that gentlemen of this description, charged our good Queen Elizabeth with being a "Papist at her heart," we shall not be surprised to find the same accusation brought against the best of Kings and his Ministers.

The following attack upon the unity of the Constitution, commonly called the Alliance betwixt Church and State, is in no degree less artful than the preceeding: In it the Dissenters principles are completely developed; the Emperor Constantine is made the vehicle of attack, but the British Constitution is most evidently the object to be wounded. "In his own person,"* says the Dissenter, "he united the Civil and Ecclesiastical Supremacy;§ *deprived the subjects of the Prince of Peace* of their *unquestionable birth-right*, as the Lord's free *men, and made the kingdom of Christ completely a kingdom of this world.* * * * * * * * * * * * *
In the progress of his design, he organised the Church according to the principles of Civil Government, constituted an endless host of officers, under the titles of Patriarchs, Metropoletans, Archbishops, Exarchs, and Country Bishops, *completely deprived*

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* Evangelical Magazine for 1796, page 13.

§ Very much as his Majesty does at this day.

the people of that power confided to them by Christ, their great Lawgiver; and *seated himself* in *the chair of infallibility*."

Such extracts as these, completely develope to us their meaning, when they tell us further—" It is with pleasure we look forwards to that happy day, when all the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our God and his Christ." And when they express the hope of " being made in some measure *instrumental* to it."

The present occasion is not the first upon which religion has been prostituted into a mask, for the worst of purposes. We find in the pages of our history, that both the Church and State were, in Charles's time, overturned by a scheme apparently much less dangerous than the present. It was, however, fostered into maturity by the Dissenters, and ended in a most dreadful catastrophe, which points with a steady hand to what the present farce ultimately tends. I could multiply instances from the Magazine, tending to develope the scheme of its conductors, but it will probably be more convincing to introduce a few from their other writings, to confirm the point in question.

" The Man of sin,"* says one of these gentle-

* Cockin's Sermon before the Missionary Society, in London, May 9, 1798, page 61.

" is driven from his fortress. God is abolish-
" ing the *idols* of *silver* and *gold*. When the blow
" is aimed at the *head*, and the arrow enters the
" *heart*, the extremities are certain to die. This
" stalking horse will stumble, fall and be broken.
" * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *
" Religion will not then be held criminal, nor will
" any man be thought *amenable* to his fellow crea-
" tures for *matters* of faith, or *modes* of worship.
" Fines, imprisonment and death, for things purely
" spiritual, and in which no man, nor any power
" upon earth, has *any right* to *interfere*, will be
" held in universal abhorrence. * * * * *
" * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

" This subject, and the different views and con-
" duct of men about it, may serve to give us a dis-
" tinguishing criterion of character. There is no-
" thing on which men more decidedly divide than
" what relates to the kingdom and interest of Jesus
" Christ. One party is endeavouring to promote it
" with all their power. These rejoice in its pros-
" perity, and wish above all things to see it obtain
" more fully and extensively in the world: but the
" enemies of this cause, pursue a different course.
" They consider all the pains that are taken as the
" effect of enthusiasm, and upon all occasions, re-
" present its friends as a set of ignorant and deluded
" men. They suppose themselves wise and great

" in proportion to their abilities to encounter the " evidences of Christianity, and to hinder its fur- " ther progress. There are others, who stand " neuter. Their business is to look on, and to act " as opportunity offers for their honour or emolu- " ment. These are of a Laodicean description, and " mind their own concerns much more than the glory " of Christ. They find it more convenient to move " in the old sphere, and common beaten track. It " would be too great a piece of condescension to " come down from their eminence, and lose the " honour of being called of men Rabbi, Rabbi. " There is no difficulty in certain cases to distin- " guish characters. When men are under the ne- " cessity of shewing on what side they are, the " conduct shews the man. Suppose a river should " overflow its banks, and the waters of that river " had a new channel to find, it would, no doubt, " attract the notice of the whole neighbourhood. " In this case men would act according to their " several inclinations and interests. *Some who con-* " *sidered this event as the greatest blessing, would* " *rejoice in the direction of the current,* and the rapi- " dity of its rise, expecting that these waters would " fertilise the country. These would, of course, do " every thing in their power to remove obstruc- " tions, and to facilitate the progress of the stream, " following it with increasing pleasure as far as the " eye could reach; but there might be others actu-

"ated by different feelings, and employed in ano-
"ther way. They might fear that these streams
"might do them a material injury, by coming with
"such violence as to break down their fences, co-
"ver their gardens, and in a great measure spoil
"their lands. These fears would, no doubt,
"prompt to action, and means would be used
"either to keep down the river, or by proper
"banks and wears to guard it from themselves."

From this extract, it is easy to conclude, whether these gentlemen approve of *revolutions* or no—and as to the long parade of religion, with which their sentiments are carefully blended, it only reminds one of that sect amongst the Jews, who made large their phylacteries, and for a pretence, made long prayers—Indeed their absurd ideas, that Christ's kingdom should eventually turn out a temporal one, in which they are to bear sway, and their impious notion that they are, exclusively, the elect of God, marks their origin so strongly, as to intimate that human passions are too frequently the formers of our creeds.

The gentleman in question, not content, however, with giving us his sentiments so explicitly in writing, forgetful of the mild spirit of toleration, under which his restless sect had enjoyed a long series of indulgencies, and probably thinking himself secure within the walls of a brother's tabernacle,

had, I believe, very unintentionally the honour to entertain a neighbouring Magistrate with a most impudent lampoon upon *lawn sleeves* and the very *reverend wearers* of them. His Worship, honest man, not quite so much seasoned in the principles of Tom Paine, as *some Others* have been, thought himself bound, both in point of honour and duty, to call the Dissenter to an account for his indecent attempt to prejudice British subjects against our Hierarchy. The Dissenter seems at first to have been impertinent; but when he found his Worship inexorable, by, and with, no doubt, the advice of the elders, he made a submission as sneaking and fulsome, as his impudence was in the first instance excessive. But surely it is needless to multiply proofs of the disaffection of these meddling mortals.

Another dissenting Minister, a writer in this Magazine, had the opportunity of hearing a truly loyal sermon, a circumstance, which probably, doth not frequently occur to him, from a Clergyman not less respectable for his age and truly christian conduct, than for standing the sixth of his year on the Cambridge list of honours; yet, the Dissenter in question, had the modesty, in a paroxism of indignation, not only to reflect severely upon the preacher's understanding, but even upon his integrity; when assuredly the loyalty of the sermon, and the honest

warmth with which it was delivered, constituted the principal provocation.

If this gentleman was at all capable of taking the dimensions of his own understanding, he, probably, would be too much ashamed of the pigmy, ever to be guilty of reflecting, in the smallest degree, upon others.

The third gentleman who attracts our notice as a supporter of the Evangelical Magazine, has published an account of an ejected Minister, evidently intended to prejudice the minds of the inhabitants of the West Riding of Yorkshire, in a most artful manner, against the Hierarchy. He has represented the Schismatics who were most nefariously intruded under the usurpation, *into the* livings of the deserving Clergy; and most righteously rejected under Charles the second, (without saying one syllable of the real state of the case, which is ably explained in Walker's History of the suffering Clergy) as persecuted saints. Is there any candour or fairness in such down right Presbyterian misrepresentation? I confess it appears to me, from even their own accounts, that every restriction laid upon the Dissenters, has been *forced* from a Government, mild and forbearing; and that if it were possible, for men of their principles, to keep themselves peaceable for any length of time, the trifling restrictions by which they are curbed, would most assuredly be

all of them as soon as it could be done with safety, removed: But alas! they not only want to make the kingdom of Christ, a kingdom of this world, in direct opposition to his everlasting decree; but *they* wish to be the *chief Rulers* in it. These three supporters of the Evangelical Magazine, are the only ones with whose characters I have the smallest acquaintance.* It is, however, natural to conclude, that their associates in this work, are minds of the same calibre; and that the work itself is designed, eventually, to undermine the British Constitution; as such it ought immediately to be relinquished by all loyal men, and by every true member of the Established Church.

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* Two hearers of a gentleman of the same fraternity, and of the same neighbourhood, were in high conversation—"This man," says one of them, speaking of a loyal Minister, "teaches his people when they go to market, whatever is the price of provisions, to lay down their money, take what they want, and go away with peace and quietness: yet this man is called a Gospel Minister." "Aye," said the other, "but our Mr. ———, teaches us no such thing."

N. B. This Mr. ——— was requested to preach a Club Sermon—the gentleman preached with great fluency—"And now," said he, in the conclusion, "what do you think, my B——n, of the state of things? I think there ought to be a REVOLUTION."

The Writer had the anecdote from a person of undoubted veracity, at whose house the sermon was preached.

One of the publications circulated with great secrecy, by a Calvinistic Dissenting Minister, amongst the lower orders of the people, contains the following friendly declarations towards Government: The first general principle upon which we found our dissent is this: "That no civil Magistrate can have any right, authority or power, over the consciences and religion of men." The Christian religion is an address to the reason and understandings of mankind: Establishments are an address to their prejudices and passions. In one, the love and pursuit of truth is strongly inculcated; in the other, it is weakened, if not destroyed, by the temptations of interest and worldly preferment. The language of the Christian religion is, prove all things, hold fast that which is good; but that of the civil Magistrate is, I have proved and examined for you, and unless you hold fast what I have determined to be right, you shall be deprived of many temporal advantages here, and, without doubt, perish everlastingly hereafter."

Another of the sections is concluded with these friendly compliments to the Church: "I think you must acknowledge, that there is considerable weight in the objections which I have urged against the doctrines of the Church of England, though they are by no means all that might be mentioned; and here I appeal to your serious thoughts, if we see the

most holy religion of our Saviour (who will also soon be our judge) thus corrupted, deformed, exposed to the contempt of scoffing unbelievers, made a dangerous stumbling block and an occasion of offence to inquisitive minds; whether, in this case, our duty to Almighty God, our allegiance to Jesus Christ, our concern for the honour and success of his Gospel, our love to our fellow men, our regard to the account which we are soon to give of our fidelity to this trust, do not all loudly call upon us to declare openly our protest against *these corruptions of Christianity*, and to profess ourselves Dissenters from that Church?"

Such are the specimens which we meet with on all hands of dissenting loyalty. In short, reasoning from the extracts and circumstances already adduced, we can have little doubt what description of men are principally concerned in that deep-laid scheme, which the Evangelical Magazine seems conducted purposely to encourage. The direct attack is upon the Church; there is always an ostensible object, but the Constitution itself is ultimately aimed at. In this scheme, I conclude, every ambitious boy, whose innate pride has taught him to consider himself elected of God, chosen, and precious, if his abilities are in any respect calculated for the work, is invited to partake. If he can read, he is to become the leader in a reading society. If he *cannot read*,

lie may possibly *preach*; if he cannot preach, he can perhaps pray;* and political sentiments introduced snugly in prayer, have a wonderful effect upon the auditory.

These men by no means form a rope of sand, but are connected in bodies. Thus we find a *congregational* society for spreading the Gospel *in England*: This, if we may judge from the name, has some kind of sway throughout the whole system.

After this we meet with a London Itinerant Society. This may not only serve to connect the societies, but to disseminate their principles where there are none. We next descend to County Unions: thus we find an Association in Warwickshire for spreading opinions; an Association for similar purposes in Gloucestershire; an Independent Association in Kent; a County Association

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* The Writer was one day in a neighbouring cottage, when three celebrated Itinerants came in—The first begun—O - - - - - thou knoweſt whatever ſome (the Writer) may think, we are no novices—We have known thee this fifteen years. He ſoon worked himſelf up into a paſſion, and made uſe of ſtrange familiar expreſſions. When exhauſted he ſprung from his knees, and bawled out a hymn, of which the Writer recollects theſe lines:

Tho' the Devil aſſaults us with lightning and thunder,
We are true to our J——, and we'll never knock under.

Now, Tom, do thou pray—and another immmediately begun.

What muſt be the reſult, when ſuch men as theſe are ſent out to convert the world; and ſuch prayers as theſe are preferred before that exquiſitely beautiful comment upon the Holy Scriptures, contained in our Liturgy!

held in Somerset, and a fund for village preaching; a County Association in Hampshire; in Bedfordshire an Union for village preaching. We find Associations for similar purposes mentioned as existant in Suffolk and Northumberland, in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire. At Worcester is a Society to encourage evangelical preaching in destitute towns and villages; a Reading Society at Leeds, for similar purposes; a Western Association of Calvinistic Ministers; a Societas Evangelica, to encourage itinerant preaching. Two itinerant preachers are appointed in Lancashire. There is a Baptist Association in St. Albans; an Itinerant Preacher in Dorsetshire; another in the North Riding of Yorkshire. At Reading there is a Society for the encouragement of village preaching, and at Taunton itinerant excursions for similar purposes; and I believe they have at least one Academy for the education of men to become Itinerants. Wherever a sufficient number of people is collected by these exertions, to form a congregation, a chapel is built, in consequence of which we find, in a few years, no less than sixty-two chapels opened, for, I fear, no better purpose than that of stirring up strife and sedition.

The Writer has had an opportunity of inquiring diligently the result of these exertions, in one district, amongst a once harmless, loyal and moral people; and is sorry to announce that the result

exactly corresponded with his fears. The people have been taught to despise Churches and the regular Clergy; to believe that all existent Governments will shortly be done away; and that then the power will be altogether in the elect; nay, some of them go so far as openly to declare, that they wish the Churches pulled down; neither should he forget to mention, for the edification of some credulous *religious* people, that one of these itinerants so far threw of the mask, as to argue pointedly and directly against a trinity of persons in the Godhead. To suppose that men of this description are encouragers of genuine Christianity, is absurd.

To the *most religious* of the Clergy, the Writer appeals, and seriously proposes to them this question. Who have been the greatest opposers of their labours? Surely it will be granted, that those very men have, who have been the greatest opposers likewise, in an *underneath* way, of Government. Who were the great supporters of the Democratic Candidates at the last election? The Dissenters. Who formed parties to introduce democratic publications into our book clubs? The Dissenters most certainly—by artfully blending democracy with their religious tenets, they are rendered more palatable to human depravity; by this they rapidly increase the number of their converts; they seduce the minds of men to their principles, even during their

devotions, when they are unsuspicious and off their guard, and by the mixture of religion they make them *Bigots* to their cause. They make them rebels; and to confirm them in rebellion, they make them enthusiasts.

The Writer of this publication is a firm advocate for the Christian religion; by it he wishes that his conduct and conversation may be directed; and in it he hopes to find the greatest consolation at the hour of death. A declining state of health is perpetually reminding him of that hour, and of course, his evidence upon this occasion, cannot be supposed to be influenced by any temporal considerations. It is the result of much consideration and great inquiry, and of the most confirmed conviction; and as such he wishes it to be acted upon by all who are really seeking the welfare of their fellow-creatures. He wishes the sincere Christians of all denominations every indulgence which conscience requires; but he would infinitely rather that the strong hand of power should crush rebellion *in its bud*, than that his native country should, like the sister kingdom, be plunged into the horrors of civil commotions. He is aware that there are amongst the Dissenters, many good men, who regret, as much as he does, the conduct of their Brethren. From such he has ever met with great liberality; and to such he has always given the right hand of fellowship with pleasure. He hopes he ever shall,

for he is convinced that some of them will even thank him for this publication, since he has only done in it what they ought long ago to have done themselves. He militates not with any description of Christians as such, but he is in most perfect warfare with all descriptions of rebels, whether open or covert; and above all things, he detests that hypocrisy which would promote rebellion under the sacred mask of religion.

The Writer has recently heard, that the religious gentleman alluded to in this pamphlet, as a writer against tithes, has the great moderation in *his pursuit* after this world's good things, only to unite in his own single person, the lucrative trades of merchant, banker and steward. Much has lately been said against monopolists, and with propriety, for monopoly is most assuredly carried to a very reprehensible height. Let this gentleman then, who has stepped out of his way to give his opinion so freely relative to the revenues of the Clergy, a description of men whom, as a professor of religion, he should surely have treated with more respect, ask his own conscience whether there is no gross imposition upon the public in such an union as we have stated? while we hesitate not to ask our Legislators, whether it ought to be suffered for one moment to exist in a well regulated State?

POSTSCRIPT.

A number of circumstances have recently transpired, in which the Dissenters have taken so decided and active a part, as to confirm, beyond a possibility of doubt, the preceding statement.—— Meetings have been called, and factious resolutions have been sent, in a most Jacobinical style, into distant parts of the country, as well as to the metropolis. Inflammatory speeches were spoken, tending to prejudice the people against Government; and petitions, calculated to shew the distressed state of the nation to our enemies, have been sent to the King—Circular letters have since been addressed to the people, requesting them to rise and fight like men. The design of these letters was evidently to try what effect the preceding manœuvres had produced upon the public mind. In short, the design is only concealed from people who will not see.

It is "the dissolution of *all* the TEMPORAL POWERS (in Europe) that be; and the establishment of the *spiritual* powers that want to be." The schemers will admit of no compromise; they, or the Constitution must fall: This is the opinion of the Writer; and he is not ignorant of their devices.

They who wish to peep further into the absurdest part of this scheme, (which is, however, well calculated to impose upon the most ignorant part of the people) will compare some of the extracts introduced into this publication, with a book entitled, "The probable Progress and Issue of the Commotions which have agitated Europe, by J. Biceno." Sold by Johnson, St. Paul's Church Yard——and they may compare that publication again, with the reveries of Brothers, Turner, of Leeds, &c. &c.

In the ceremony of taking the oath, the United Englishmen are reported to make use of the 21st chap. of Ezek. 25, 26, and 27th verses. IT BEHOVES EVERY *true Briton to be armed* in defence of the Constitution, and DETERMINED.

FINIS.

R. SEDGWICK, Printer, BRADFORD.